

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

VLR: 10/17/78 NRHP: 05/24/79

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Joshua Wilton Eouse (Preferred)

AND/OR COMMON

Shank or TKE House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

412 South Main Street

-- NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Harrisonburg

-- VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Seventh (J. Kenneth Robinson)

STATE

Virginia

CODE

51

COUNTY

In City

CODE

660

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

 DISTRICT PUBLIC OCCUPIED AGRICULTURE MUSEUM BUILDING(S) PRIVATE UNOCCUPIED COMMERCIAL PARK STRUCTURE BOTH WORK IN PROGRESS EDUCATIONAL PRIVATE RESIDENCE SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

 ENTERTAINMENT RELIGIOUS OBJECT IN PROCESS YES: RESTRICTED GOVERNMENT SCIENTIFIC BEING CONSIDERED YES UNRESTRICTED INDUSTRIAL TRANSPORTATION NO

M LITARY

 OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mr. and Mrs. Roland W. Macher

STREET & NUMBER

91 Laurel Street

CITY, TOWN

Harrisonburg

-- VICINITY OF

STATE

Virginia 22801

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Rockingham County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Harrisonburg

STATE

Virginia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey

DATE

1972, 1973, 1977

 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission - 221 Governor Street

CITY, TOWN

Richmond

STATE

Virginia 23239

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Located on a generous lawn at 412 South Main Street, the Joshua Wilton House is a conspicuous landmark in the city of Harrisonburg. Erected by Joshua Wilton in 1890, the house is a highly stylized and eclectic example of late 19th-century Victorian architecture. Built of brick laid in stretcher bond, the two-and-one-half-story, central-plan house is covered by a multi-gable roof and set on a low brick foundation.

The west (main) facade consists of the central block of the house and two projecting gabled pavilions and a turret. The southwestern pavilion contains a four-window bay on the first and second stories and a single Gothic window on the attic story. The bay windows are ornamented with elaborate wooden trim and brackets, and a fancy bargeboard decorates the eaves course of the gable roof. The central pavilion contains the main entrance to the house, which consists of a leaded-glass, transom-light entry with complementing leaded-glass sidelights and a paneled door. The entry is sheltered by a one-story, bracketed porch which extends around the corner. The second and third stories of the pavilion contain pointed-arch windows crowned by hood molds. An ornamental bargeboard is found on the eaves course of the gable roof. Adjacent to the center pavilion is a single bay of two stories. Fenestration consists of 1/1 hung-sash windows which are covered by hood molds. The northwest corner of the facade contains a three-story octagonal turret covered by a pointed roof. The original imbricated slate-shingle roof covers the structure.

The north elevation shares the turret and contains a projecting two-and-one-half-story gabled pavilion. The two-bay pavilion contains 1/1 hung-sash windows crowned by hood molds. A bargeboard is found along the eaves course of the gable roof. A single bay of two stories is positioned between the pavilion and the turret. Fenestration duplicates that found on the west elevation.

The south elevation consists of a projecting gabled pavilion similar in execution and fenestration to that found on the north elevation. The east (rear) elevation is dominated by a centrally positioned two-and-one-half-story projecting gabled pavilion. The pavilion is flanked by a wood-frame enclosed porch to the southeast and an open wood-frame porch to the northeast. A bargeboard is found along the eaves course of the gable roof. Fenestration consists of 1/1 hung-sash windows framed by simply executed architrave trim.

The interior of the Wilton House reflects the eclecticism of its exterior. A sense of the period's fondness for ornamentation and display is evident in the treatment of the hall and parlors. Dominating the hall is a curved open-well stair, which consists of paneled spandrels, stylized brackets, finely turned balusters, and a turned and ornamented newel post. A much less decorative stair leads to the attic. The hall entry to the two front parlors is provided by a pair of distyle-in-antis Ionic column openings that feature paired consoles on the top of the capitals. The entrance to the northwest parlor has been encased in a multi-paned glass doorway which was added at a later date. Each of the front parlors contains its original mantel and overmantel. The mantel in the northwest parlor is composed of painted slate, imitating marble, with a delicate Eastlake-style wooden overmantel. The mantel in the southwest parlor is of wood and features exquisitely detailed carving. Both mantels retain their original highly ornamental grates. The second-floor mantels are less elaborate than those on the first.

A small outbuilding contemporary with the main house survives in the rear.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1890

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Joshua Wilton House, conspicuously located on Harrisonburg's South Main Street, ranks among the Valley's more notable examples of Victorian domestic architecture. During the late 19th century, small-town businessmen and civic leaders throughout the country had a practice of erecting proud, self-assertive, and often extravagantly decorated residences in prominent locations along the town's principal streets. Such dwellings served not only to express the tastes of their occupants but their wealth and position in the community. Unfortunately, because of the cost of maintenance and often the high value of the real estate they occupy, such houses have become vulnerable to demolition, and many have disappeared in recent years. The Wilson House, completed in 1890, is a reminder of how leading citizens' very proper homes lent prestige to their owners while giving embellishment to the town.

Joshua Wilson, the builder of the house, came to Harrisonburg from Canada in 1865, and with one P. Bradley he established a foundry. In 1868 Wilton opened a hardware store and permanently settled in his newly adopted city. According to the obituary published by the Harrisonburg Daily News Record on November 19, 1928, Wilton was "one of the factors in the upbuilding of this community since the Civil War." He was extremely active in community affairs, serving as a president of the First National Bank, as a member of the building committee and Board of Trustees of the hospital, and as a member of the Harrisonburg City Council. The Wilton House reflects its builder's prosperity and legendary attention to detail. It also stands as a testimony to his concern for the most fashionable architecture of the period, being a fine example of late 19th-century taste and building practice.

In his Architecture of Country Houses of 1850, the popular architectural writer A. J. Downing stressed that a house should express the personality of the owner and not the architect: "It is not always that a proprietor can design his own house, or even that his architect knows him so completely as to make his work express the individual truly. Hence, we seldom see entirely satisfactory architecture, where a beautiful home reflects a fine character", (pp. 25-26). Architectural pattern books of Downing's era dealt mainly with style and theory. By the 1870s and through the 1890s, the situation changed in the direction Downing had indicated, giving consideration to the taste and fashions of the client. While pattern books were still the main source of inspiration, these began to focus more on building detail rather than on architectural theory and style.

Cummings and Miller, in their introduction to Designs for Street Fronts, Suburban Houses and Cottages of 1868, reflect the changing mode in building practice:

This work differs in its design from any, heretofore issued; it contains designs for all the various features which enter into the composition of buildings both for the city and for the country...this work treats of none of the orders or styles of architecture...no plans are given in this work, for the reason, that the wants of persons in regard to the arrangement of their buildings are as different as their characters...

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

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Joshua Wilson House, Harrisonburg, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET #1

ITEM NUMBER 7, 8 & 9 PAGE 1

7. DESCRIPTION

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

The Wilton House lot on South Main Street is the same lot acquired by Joshua Wilton in 1887. The nominated acreage reflects the size of a residential house lot at the time the house was built in 1890.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

The Wilton House is the product of this method of building. Thus, the house's eclecticism may be understood as a statement of Wilton's taste and preferences and not of a single architectural design. It is not surprising that certain details, such as window heads, bargeboards, and brackets may be found in a number of pattern books of the period. The interior plan and detail of the house were undoubtedly Wilton's preference.

The house passed out of the Wilson family in 1937, when it became the property of O. D. Shank. Most recently used as the Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity house of James Madison University, the residence has been purchased by the Macher family, who hope to restore the structure.

RCC

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Wilton, Joshua. Obituary. Daily News Record, 18 November 1928, p. 1.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Cummings and Miller. Architecture. Designs for Street Fronts, Suburban Homes, and Cottages. Toledo: 1868.
- Downing, A. J. The Architecture of Country Houses. New York: 1850.
- Interviews with Mr. and Mrs. Dwight Miller, Mr. E. P. Shank, and Mr. and Mrs. John Wilson.
- Spates, Thomas. "Historic Harrisonburg, A Walking Tour." Rockingham County Historical Society. 1969.
- Wayland, John. Historic Harrisonburg. Staunton, Va.: 1949. (See Continuation Sheet #1)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Harrisonburg, Virginia

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A | 17 | 685910 | 4257140 |

B | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

D | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

E | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

F | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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H | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION Beginning at a point on the E side of S. Main Street, at SE corner of intersection with Campbell Street; thence extending 100' E along S side of Campbell Street; thence extending 200' S; thence extending 250' W to S. Main Street; thence extending 200' along E side of S. Main Street to point of origin.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE

October 1978

STREET & NUMBER

221 Governor Street

TELEPHONE

(804) 786-3144

CITY OR TOWN

Richmond

STATE

Virginia 23219

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Julian Hill

TITLE Tucker Hill - Executive Director
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE OCT 17 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

U.S.G.S. 7.5' quadrangle (scale 1:24,000)
Harrisonburg, Virginia 1964 (PR1968)

JOSHUA WILTON HOUSE, Harrisonburg, VA

UTM References:
17/685910/4257140

